

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 06244 01 OF 02 200937Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2338

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 6244

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PK, US, PFOR

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

SUMMARY: DURING MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ON JUNE 17, AZIZ AHMED TOLD ME HE WAS PLEASED WITH OUTCOME OF PARIS TALKS, BUT SPATE OF UNFRIENDLY ACTIONS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE MEETING, INCLUDING NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND A-7 DECISION, LEFT SECRETARY'S PROTESTATIONS OF FRIENDSHIP IN DOUBT. THE MINISTER ALSO JUSTIFIED HIS SPEECH IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN WHICH HE CRITICIZED US ON REPROCESSING ISSUE BY STATING THAT GOP HAD RECEIVED "INSULTING THREATS" FROM US ON THIS ISSUE FOR NINE MONTHS AND PAKISTAN COULD NO LONGER "SUFFER IN SILENCE." HE THEN WENT ON TO GIVE EXAMPLES FROM LONG LIST OF PURPORTED INSULTS.

I NOTED FOR OUR PART WE HAD HELD DISCUSSIONS ON REPROCESSING IN SPIRIT OF TRYING TO FIND A SOLUTION WITHIN CONTEXT OF OUR LAW AND OUR MUTUAL DESIRE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM. I ALSO SAID THAT WE WANTED TO LOOK AHEAD TO A BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIP, BUT THE SPEECHES IN THE ASSEMBLY, CRITICAL PRESS STORIES AND IMPLICATIONS WE WERE STILL INVOLVED IN A MASSIVE CONSPIRACY AGAINST PAKISTAN MADE ME
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 06244 01 OF 02 200937Z

WONDER IF THE GOP WAS EQUALLY WILLING TO PUT PAST BEHIND US. WE EXCHANGED VIEWS ON THE A-7 TURNDOWN, WITH THE MINISTER ASCRIBING IT TO OUR CONCERN FOR INDIAN SENSITIVITIES. HE CONCLUDED BY NOTING HE WANTED TO BE CERTAIN THE SECRETARY UNDERSTOOD WHY HE GAVE HIS SPEECH ON THE REPROCESSING ISSUE AND WAS AWARE OF HIS VIEWS ON US/PAK RELATIONS. I BELIEVE THE MINISTER WANTED TO GO ON RECORD THAT HIS ATTACK

ON US WAS UNAVOIDABLE AFTER NINE MONTHS OF "INSULTS", AND ALSO TO SHOW THAT THE GOP WAS STILL LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN, EVEN IF ONLY SLIGHTLY, TO IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE US. END SUMMARY.

1. I WAS CALLED TO MFA AT NOON, JUNE 17, TO MEET WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER AZIZ AHMED. AFTER A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF PLANS FOR AMBASSADOR HUMMEL'S ARRIVAL, THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE HAD SEEN THE RECORD OF A RECENT INFORMAL TALK I HAD WITH DR. KHURSHID HYDER, DIRECTOR GENERAL (AMERICAS) CONCERNING US/PAK RELATIONS. (I HAD ON THAT OCCASION MADE POINTS SIMILAR TO THOSE CONVEYED BY DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS TO AMBASSADOR YAQUB KHAN IN STATE 138052.) HE NOTED I HAD SAID TO DR. HYDER THAT I WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE COURSE OF US/PAK RELATIONS AND WORRIED THAT IF THE PRESENT STRAINS CONTINUE, THE RELATIONSHIP COULD SUFFER LONG-TERM DAMAGE. THE MINISTER ASKED IF I WERE STATING A PERSONAL OR AN OFFICIAL VIEW.

2. I REPLIED THAT MY VIEWS REFLECTED THE OFFICIAL USG POSITION, AS MOST RECENTLY EXPRESSED BY DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS TO AMBASSADOR YAQUB. MY COMMENTS HAD BEEN MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RECENT SPEECHES IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CRITICAL OF THE UNITED STATES AND MY CONCERN THAT WE WERE MOVING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION FOLLOWING THE PARIS TALKS BETWEEN THE SECRETARY AND THE MINISTER.

3. THE MINISTER THEN LAUNCHED INTO SO LENGTHY PERORATION ON THE GOP'S WILLINGNESS TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS BUT IT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 06244 01 OF 02 200937Z

SEEMED THE US IS NOT INTERESTED IN RECIPROCATING. TAKING THE ROLE OF THE INJURED PARTY, AND SPEAKING ON THE OFFENSIVE, ALBEIT IN A CONTROLLED AND MODERATE MANNER, THE MINISTER SAID THAT AT PARIS HSWAS IMPRESSED BY THE SECRETARY'S STATEMENTS THAT THE USG IS RESOLVED TO HAVE GOOD RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN. HE SAID VANCE HAD STRESSED THE ROAD OF FRIENDSHIP AND HE QUOTED THE SECRETARY AS SAYING THAT THE USG BELIEVES FRIENDSHIP WITH PAKISTAN IS IMPORTANT TO BOTH COUNTRIES AND TO THE STABILITY OF THE REGION. THE GOP AGREED, HE AND THE PM THOUGHT IT WAS A USEFUL MEETING IN PARIS, AND BHUTTO HIMSELF HAD SAID THE PAST SHOULD BE PUT BEHIND US.

4. AZIZ AHMED THEN NOTED THAT THREE THINGS IMMEDIATELY HAPPENED WHICH PUT THE SECRETARY'S WORDS IN DOUBT. FIRST WAS THE FLORA LEWIS ARTICLE ON THE REPROCESSING PLANT. ALTHOUGH THE SECRETARY ACTED QUICKLY TO ASSURE THE PAK DELEGATION THE STORY WAS NOT TRUE, IT STILL "LEFT A BAD TASTE." SECOND WAS THE O'KEEFE MEMO STORY, AND

FINALLY THE A-7 DECISION. THE MINISTER SAID THE GOP
COULD ONLY WONDER WHY THESE THREE THINGS HAPPENED IN QUICK
SUCCESSION, ESPECIALLY THE A-7 DECISION WHICH HAD BEEN
UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR OVER TWO YEARS. HE ADDED
THAT THE GOP IS PREPARED TO FACE A DETERIORATION IN
RELATIONS BUT HIS IMPRESSION HAD BEEN THAT THE US DID
NOT DESIRE THAT COURSE.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 06244 02 OF 02 171401Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 6244

EXDIS

5. THE MINISTER THEN WENT ON TO EXPLAIN WHY HE MADE
HIS SPEECH IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LAST WEEKEND DURING
WHICH HE SPOKE
ON THE RECORD OF DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES BETWEEN
OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS TO CRITICIZE THE US FOR ITS PRESSURE
ON PAKISTAN ON THE REPROCESSING ISSUE. THE MINISTER, IN
STRONG TERMS, SAID THAT PAKISTAN HAD RECEIVED "INSULTING
THREATS" FROM THE USG FOR NINE MONTHS ON REPROCESSING BUT
"WE SUFFERED THROUGH IN SILENCE." THE MINISTER SAID THAT
ALTHOUGH FORMER SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD PROMISED THE
REPROCESSING ISSUE WOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED PUBLICLY, IT
HAD BEEN USED PUBLICLY TO KEEP PRESSURE ON THE GOP. IT
WAS ONLY WHEN FACED WITH ALL THE PRESSURE AND INSULTS,
THE MINISTER ADDED, HE "DECIDED TO COME OUT PUBLICLY
SINCE IT'S BEEN SUCH A NASTY EXPERIENCE."

6. I NOTED THAT WE HAD BEEN DISTURBED TO HEAR THE MINISTER
QUOTE FROM OUR PRIVATE DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES OUT OF
CONTEXT. I KNEW THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER SOMETIMES
SPOKE WITH VIVIDNESS AND HUMOROUSLY AND HIS COMMENTS
SHOULD NOT BE MISINTERPRETED. I ADDED THAT THE CARTER
ADMINISTRATION HAS NO INTENTION OF MAKING A "HORRIBLE
EXAMPLE OF PAKISTAN" - TO QUOTE ONE OF THE MINISTER'S

PHRASES

IN HIS SPEECH - AND OUR PAST DISCUSSIONS ON THIS
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 06244 02 OF 02 171401Z

ISSUE WERE IN THE SPIRIT OF TRYING TO FIND A SOLUTION
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OUR OWN LAWS, SUCH AS THE SYMINGTON
AMENDMENT, AND OUR MUTUAL DESIRE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM.
AMBASSADOR BYROADE'S TALKS WITH THE PM AND AZIZ AHMED WERE
ALWAYS IN THE SAME SPIRIT.

7. THE MINISTER THEN REPEATED A LITANY OF SELECTED
QUOTATIONS WHICH HE SAID PROVED WE HAD "DEEPLY INSULTED
AND THREATENED" PAKISTAN. HE ADDED THAT WE COULDDISAGREE
ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE REPROCESSING PROBLEM, BUT HE WAS
TALKING OF THE MANNER AND KINDS OF THREATS ADDRESSED TO
HIS COUNTRY. I REPLIED THAT OUR DIALOGUE HAD TO BE SEEN
IN THE SETTING OF CONCERNS ON THE HILL AND OUR INTEREST
IN FINDING AMUTUALLY SATISFACTORY WAY OUT OF THE REPROCESSING
DILEMMA. I ADDED THAT IN ANY CASE I HOPED WE COULD PUT
THESE RECRIMINATIONS BEHIND US AND LOOKAHEAD. THE SPEECHES
IN THE NATIONAL ASSENRLY, THE CONTINUING PRESS STORIES CRITICAL
OF US AND THE STRONG IMPLICATIONS FROM GOP LEADERS THAT
WE ARE ENGAGED IN A MASSIVE CONSPIRACY MADE ME
WONDER IF THE GOP WAS EQUALLY WILLING TO PUT THE PAST BEHIND
US. IT WAS IN THAT CONTEXT I HAD SPOKEN WITH DR. HYDER.
WE SHARE A MUTUALITY OF INTEREST IN PAKISTAN'S STABILITY
AND SECURITY AND I HOPED WE COULD BUILD OUR RELATIONSHIP
ON THAT UNDERSTANDING. INDICATIONS OF OUR INTEREST ARE
OUR AID AND MILITARY SALES PROGRAMS, BOTH OF WHICH ARE
CONTINUING.

8. THE MINISTER REPLIED "THOSE PROGRAMS ARE IRRELEVANT,
THREATS WERE
WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT." HE SAID THAT OUR
RELATIONSHIP IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE EXPRESSION OF THE
RELATIONSHIP IN PROGRAMS. I NOTED THAT THE PROGRAMS ARE
INDEED RELEVANT AS THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE KIND OF
RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE; HE REITERATED THAT EXPRESSIONS ARE
NOT IMPORTANT. THE CENTRALCQUESTION IS WHETHER WE HAVE
A COMMON VIEW AND APPROACH. HE ADDED THE GOP IS NOT SURE
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 06244 02 OF 02 171401Z

WHAT IS THE US INTEREST IN THIS AREA. HE SAID AS AN
EXAMPLE THAT WE HAD DECIDED NOT TO SELL THE A-7 BECAUSE
OF INDIAN SENSITIVITIES.

9. I REPLIED THAT ASCRIBING THE A-7 TURNDOWN TO OUR CONCERN ABOUT INDIAN VIEWS WAS A MISREADING OF THE DECISION. I POINTED OUT THAT THE REFUSAL WAS BASED ON THE PREMISE THAT THE US WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST TO INTRODUCE NEW GENERATIONS OF SOPHISTICATED TECHNOLOGY IN AN AREA, AND REITERATED WE HAD AGREED TO CONSIDER REQUESTS FOR OTHER TYPES OF AIRCRAFT. AHMED BRUSQUELY REJECTED THIS LATTER POINT, SAYING WE HAD BEEN TRYING TO CONVINCE PAKISTAN TO BUY THE F-5 FOR YEARS AND THAT PERHAPS THEY SHOULD NOT BUY ANYTHING FROM US SO AS NOT TO STRAIN OUR RELATIONS WITH INDIA. I SAID THAT WAS UP TO THE GOP, BUT FOR OUR PART WE RECOGNIZED THEIR NEED FOR MORE MODERN AIRCRAFT AND THAT THIS ASSESSMENT WAS NOT INFLUENCED BY POSSIBLE INDIAN REACTIONS.

10. THE MINISTER CLOSED THE CONVERSATION BY RELAXING SOMEWHAT, EVEN SMILING, AND SAYING THAT HE WANTED TO BE CERTAIN THE SECRETARY KNEW THAT HE HAD BEEN ACTING ON THE BASIS OF THE UNDERSTANDINGS HE THOUGHT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED IN PARIS. HE FELT CONSTRAINED TO MAKE HIS SPEECH IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON THE REPROCESSING ISSUE, ONLY AFTER THE GOP HAD SUFFERED IN SILENCE FOR NINE MONTHS; HE WANTED SECRETARY VANCE TO UNDERSTAND THAT. I SAID WE WOULD CERTAINLY CONVEY HIS VIEWS TO THE SECRETARY.

11. COMMENT: AS IS OFTEN HIS PRACTICE WHEN HIS POSITION IS WEAK, AZIZ AHMED WAS ON THE OFFENSIVE, EMPHASIZING THAT PAKISTAN WAS THE AGGRIEVED PARTY, AND REITERATING THAT ALTHOUGH THEY ARE LIVING UP TO THE SPIRIT OF PARIS, THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHY WE HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO. THE MINISTER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ISLAMA 06244 02 OF 02 171401Z

EXPLAINED ONE OF THE MOST EGREGIOUS BREACHES OF THE UNDERSTANDING ON THEIR SIDE - HIS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEECH - BY STATING THAT WE HAD LEFT PAKISTAN WITH NO CHOICE AFTER NINE MONTHS OF INSULTS.

12. AZIZ AHMED'S EMPHATIC DESIRE TO ENSURE THE SECRETARY IS AWARE OF HIS VIEWS IS ALSO DUE IN PART TO WHAT WE SEE AS THE GOP'S DESIRE TO KEEP THE DOOR OPEN - EVEN IF ONLY SLIGHTLY - TO THE POSSIBILITY OF IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. BY ATTEMPTING TO JUSTIFY HIS ASSEMBLY SPEECH, AND THE GOP DESIRE TO IMPROVE OUR TIES; WHILE QUESTIONING OUR OWN DEDICATION TO THAT GOAL, HE WANTED TO SHOW THAT THE GOP REMAINS PATIENT AND WILLING TO GIVE US FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVE WE WANT GOOD RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN.
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